

**Cuyahoga Falls City Council
Minutes of the Planning & Zoning Committee**

August 29, 2022

Members: Susan Spinner, Chair
Jerry James
Adam Miller

Mrs. Spinner called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. All members were present.

The minutes of the July 18, 2022 Planning and Zoning Committee meeting were approved as written.

Legislation Discussed:

Temp. Ord. A-88

Temp. Ord. A-89

Discussion:

Temp. Ord. A-88

An ordinance accepting the Planning Commission recommendation for the construction of a school campus for grades 6 through 12, located at 2630 13th Street for the Cuyahoga Falls City School District, and declaring an emergency.

Ms. Diana Colavecchio, Community Development Director, and Mr. Rob Kurtz, Planning Director, presented Temporary Ordinance A-88 to Council. The Cuyahoga Falls City School District is proposing to construct a new middle/high school campus (grades 6-12) at the Bolich Middle School/former Newberry Elementary site. The 48-acre site is located at the northwest corner of Portage Trail and 13th Street. The plan will include a new 360,000 square foot school building with a performing arts center and new multi-use athletic stadium. The project will also include the demolition of Bolich Middle School and the Newberry Elementary School.

Mayor Walters thanked Council, the School Administration and Board for the hard work that has gone into this project. This is the missing piece in the city and is finally happening. It is an extremely exciting project for the technology and security to come forth for future students and is going to be a game changer in Cuyahoga Falls.

Ms. Colavecchio thanked Council for coming back early for this project. The urgency is money. For this project, they need to consider this legislation and vote on it as soon as possible because they are about to enter into the construction season that can be cut short by the winter weather, delaying construction and costing this project money. This is a much-anticipated \$113,000,000 state-of-the-art school campus. The School has done a phenomenal job of holding multiple public engagement meetings. This is the moment to finally introduce this project to Council. A project like this is going to completely transform the city. They have a state-of-the-art school system that is going to lead the field of education and enhance the look and feel of that part of the city. 13th Street and Portage Trail are going to look different and beautiful. They are hopeful that this will

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attract new residents to the city. They have been anticipating this for some time and making their best efforts to provide for additional housing for the city.

Ms. Colavecchio stated that, in order to accommodate the site plan, they have a companion ordinance that involves a land swap. There are two small strips of land on 13th Street that the City owns and the School needs. In exchange for that, the City is going to acquire a parcel of the high school property that is immediately adjacent to Oakwood Cemetery. There are no immediate plans to extend Oakwood Cemetery, and, in fact, the agreement states that will not be done until the old school is vacated, and that would be in 2025 or 2026. The school will maintain that parcel until that time.

Dr. Andrea Celico, Superintendent of the Cuyahoga Falls School District; Mr. Anthony Gomez, President of the Cuyahoga Falls School Board; A.J. Harris, School Board member and Alecia Coco, School Board member, were present. School Board members Patty White and Carrie Schaefer were unable to be present.

Building Features:

- Exterior material will be brick in multiple colors and textures
- Two interior courtyards

Site Circulation:

- Primary entrance to the campus will be located at the signalized intersection of Portage Trail and North Haven Boulevard.
- Bus drop-off and pick-up will occur in the parking lot that is adjacent to 13th Street.
- Multiple pedestrian access onto the campus including a pedestrian walkway will also connect to an existing pedestrian path located on Norma Street.
- Westbound right turn lane 425 feet in length will be constructed along Portage Trail east of the North Haven Boulevard.

Site Features:

- Northern part of the site will remain open space that is comprised of storm water detention areas, practice fields, and preserved wooded areas
- Significant landscaping proposed around the perimeter and throughout the interior of the site
- Two large stormwater detention basins proposed on the northwest portion of the site and a bio-swale to be located near the main parking near the intersection of Portage Trail and 13th Street
- Overall approximately 57% of the campus will be open space

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On August 9, 2022, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the proposed site plan in Project File MSP-22-00030 with the following stipulations:

1. All exterior (parking lot and wall) lighting must meet the lighting requirements in 1144.06.
2. 2. City Council approval of the transfer of two City-owned parcels (#0217976 & #0217975) to the Cuyahoga Falls City School District.
3. 3. Stormwater management will meet 1124.03 requirements.
4. 4. A refundable cash landscape or a site completion bond payable to the City of no less than fifty percent (50%) of the cost of quantities and installation specified in the plan according to section 1145.03, be provided prior to permitting.

Mr. Scott Alleman, Then Design Architecture, who is serving as project manager, addressed Council and was available to answer questions. Mr. Anthony Gomez, School Board President, addressed Council and thanked them for attending the Special Council Meeting. Dr. Andrea Celico, Superintendent, also thanked and addressed Council.

Mrs. Spinner thanked everyone for attending the meeting and providing details regarding the project. She stated that this project has been a long time coming. The children in the community deserve the best learning environment possible, and she believes the proposed school will provide that.

Mr. James gave mega-kudos to everybody involved, from the Administration to the School Board. The School Board spent long hours in meetings with the public to get the word out about this project, and the community has come together because they know how important a good school district is for the city.

Mr. Miller stated that the School has done a great job educating the community. Council all get questions regarding the schools. A lot of the questions that he gets are actually pertaining to some of the nuts and bolts like the football stadium. He will be reaching out to some of those who spoke this evening individually. He looks forward to the project and the ribbon cutting next month.

Ms. Loza stated that she has three children, ages nine, six and four. Her oldest will be the second class entering that school, and all three of them will go through it. As a young family, she knows this is going to attract other young families to the city.

Mr. Gorbach stated that the new superintendent and engineer both made a point to thank the Administration and how pleased they were with the support they each received. He stated that he does not if know that is always the case where the Board of Education and the Administration of a city work hand in hand as well as the City has worked with you. There has always been a great collaboration between the City and the School District, and having that has to mean so much to everybody. It benefits the entire city and its residents.

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Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that Council is thrilled and privileged to be here tonight to be part of this time in the City's history and its great future. She attended Falls High and is thankful that someone voted yes and made sure that buildings get built. Children are the future and their investment in education is important, and they are happy to be part of it.

Mrs. Penta stated that her only complaint is that all three of her children have graduated, so they will not be able to experience the new school. She loves the consideration taken for the traffic and having the bus drop off, because although 13th Street is not in her ward, it is still close by, and it is a constant issue with the buses at Portage Trail and North Haven Boulevard. She has spoken to the School Board members about the green space and having classes outdoors, which her children loved. She is glad that is in the plans. She cannot wait for this pass and to move forward.

Mr. Balthis stated that this is such an important day for the community and all the work that has gone into getting here. Everyone in the community is excited. This is going to be transformational. The School District has done a good job of recognizing that residents that live near Bolich Junior High School might be concerned. It is great that the School District has held meetings, and he was impressed with the honest and open dialogue with the neighbors that live near Bolich. There is a beautiful, wooded area by Silver Lake Boulevard, and efforts are going to be made to maintain that. The amount of thought that went into the traffic planning and the parking and getting cars off the road is going to make a difference. It is going to be challenging with a big project, but he has the utmost faith and confidence in the School District's efforts to work with the neighbors.

Mr. Mark Wilkerson, 2467 6th Street, addressed Council with his concerns about having a cemetery located behind his house and the fact that it will decrease the value of his home.

Ms. Emma Grace Heath, 3020 Ninth Street, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, addressed Council and spoke in favor of the ordinance, citing the fact that her grandfather worked for the school district and would be thrilled to see this project come to fruition.

Ms. Colavecchio stated that when the City is acquiring land, it has no duty to notice adjacent homeowners. When and if they decide to develop the land would be the moment they would notice the adjacent property owners. When they are developing anything that has a neighbor adjacent to it, they beef up the buffering between the property lines. If anyone has further questions, they can let her know or ask Mr. Kurtz where they are headed on that, but it will be years away. The plot that the City is acquiring has been surveyed by a certified surveyor and a brand-new legal description has been prepared that is attached to the land swap agreement. They have done their due diligence so that they do not acquire anything that has additional liens or might have some chain title issues to be concerned about. They are 100 percent certain that the School owns the land.

Mr. James moved to bring out Temp. Ord. A-88 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mr. Miller. Motion passed (3-0).

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Temp. Ord. A-89

An ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into a land swap agreement with Cuyahoga Falls City School District in connection with the new school campus located at 2630 13th Street, and declaring an emergency.

Ms. Diana Colavecchio, Community Development Director, and Mr. Rob Kurtz, Planning Director, presented Temporary Ordinance A-89 to Council. The City and Cuyahoga Falls School District (“CFCS”) each own parcels of property which the other party needs to conduct daily operations. CFCS needs the City parcels for the development of the new school campus located at 2630 13th Street and the City needs the CFCS parcel for additional space at Oakwood Cemetery. To accomplish this goal, the City agrees to transfer Parcel Numbers 0217975 and 0217976 located on the west side of 13th Street between Portage Trail and Silver Lake Avenue, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio to CFCS and CFCS agrees to transfer part of Parcel Number 0200949 located at 2300 4th Street, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio to the City. The property that the City seeks to transfer to CFCS is no longer needed for any municipal purpose. Section 2 of the City Charter, adopted pursuant to Art. XVIII, Sections 3 and 7 of the Ohio Constitution, authorize this Council to make exception to the competitive bidding procedures set forth in the Revised Code.

Mr. Miller moved to bring out Temp. Ord. A-89 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mr. James. Motion passed (3-0).

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.